



## GOAL FIVE

*Leverage state government spending to create viable economic development opportunities in North Dakota.*



## STRATEGIES

- Assist political subdivisions to find cost-effective, last-mile connectivity solutions in individual communities.
- Facilitate partnerships with private industry and non-profit organizations to encourage resource sharing.



By facilitating partnerships, state government is able to leverage spending and promote the adoption of cost effective technology solutions in North Dakota. Two ways to advance greater professional, economic and political change include finding connectivity solutions for individual communities, and facilitating partnerships with private industry and non-profit organizations. Last-mile connectivity costs remain a barrier to linking local government offices within a community. Technical support is needed to evaluate options and identify economical solutions for connecting multiple sites. The Information Technology Department has provided this support to a number of North Dakota communities, resulting in higher bandwidth connections at a lower cost. The continuation of this service is essential to leverage the benefits of the state network and find affordable options for more cities.

Ideally, private industry will provide direct delivery of telecommunications services to citizens and businesses. In North Dakota, lack of population density can make it difficult for private industry to justify significant investments. In these cases, state government can partner with commercial customers to create a higher level of demand. In other cases, the state can facilitate cooperative arrangements between commercial or non-profit entities. Rural health clinics provide an example of the need for cooperation. Competing hospitals have established separate, duplicate networks to deliver telemedicine services to remote clinics. In one case, video equipment and network connections from two hospitals sit at opposite ends of the same room in a rural clinic. The hospitals have asked the state to explore the creation of a single network with costs shared by the participating entities. In order to promote service delivery and economic viability in rural North Dakota, the state will continue to explore these kinds of strategic partnerships as they arise.

